REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Province of Negros Occidental
CITY OF SILAY

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MAYOR MARK ANDREW ARTHUR J. GOLEZ IN THE MIDST OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS

We are greatly saddened by the news that one of our closest neighbors has had a confirmed fatality as a result of the spread of this dreaded COVID-19. I have just learned from the news that the Provincial Government of Negros Oriental confirmed the death of "Patient 39." He was a Councilor in Tayasan town who travelled to Manila on February 26, 2020 for the Philippine Councilors League Convention. My thoughts are with his family and friends.

As your City Mayor, I am fully cognizant of the Silaynons' concerns, and continue to be on top of the situation—in close coordination with our City Health Office, our City Disaster and Risk Reduction and Management Council, the Philippine National Police, our Barangay Officials, as well as public health experts over plans for now and contingencies—should an outbreak erupt in the City and across the country. Indeed, this crisis will not only cause a significant impact to the health conditional response of the government, but will also place the entirety of our continuously-growing City to a standstill. **This will be a very difficult time, without a doubt.**

Most schools and classes have already been suspended, general convergence of public gatherings and even the holding of holy masses were halted. Likewise, sports and cultural festivals were not spared. On March 13, 2020, I signed an Executive Order for the strict observance of "social distancing" that entails the conscious effort and full cooperation of the general public in order to reduce close contact and hopefully stymie community transmission of the virus.

Moreover, I will be issuing another Executive Order, as recommended by our City Disaster and Risk Reduction and Management Council as well as our Silay City Anti-Coronavirus and Other Biological Hazards and Emerging Diseases Task Force, **suspending classes in all levels in public schools and private schools in this City EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY**. We will end the school year earlier so that our students can observe social distancing measures to avoid contamination and further spread of the virus. Likewise, a curfew for all residents and those who sojourn the City is being studied. Checkpoints will be set for the monitoring of vital signs of those who travel. Should these measures be implemented, I will immediately inform all of you before-hand.

Tough decisions will be made in the future to combat the possible and further spread of the virus, and I implore the full support of our Sangguniang Panlungsod. I likewise appeal to all Silaynons to extend their full cooperation and support to your City Government. Judging by the present circumstances, a quick intelligible response to immediately address this **IMMINENT THREAT** is the most prudent thing to do. It is imperative that the City implements urgent and critical measures to prevent the spread of the disease.

My message to all Silaynons is, keep yourselves and your families safe. Observe basic protective measure such as, regularly and thoroughly cleaning your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water, maintaining at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, making sure that you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene (this means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze), then dispose of the used tissue immediately, stay home if you feel unwell, and if you have a fever, cough and difficulty in breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your barangay health workers or our City Health Personnel.

Most importantly, we need to stop spreading lies and fake news for the sake of all. Not only is this punishable by law, but this causes fear and panic which will ultimately lead to the disruption of peace and order in our City. This will lead to chaos, which might end up causing injury or loss of life. I implore all Silaynons to not be overcome by fear and ignorance but always be guided by reason. Please look to legitimate sources of information for your news. For any updates, you may follow our Facebook page, **"SILAY CITY HEALTH OFFICE"** and **"SILAY CITY DISASTER RISK REDUCTION & MANAGEMENT OFFICE"**. You may likewise contact our **Silay City Health Office COVID-19 Hotline** thru numbers: 09995728453 (for SMART); 09329705354 (for SUN Cellular); and 09150681395 (for GLOBE).

Once again, keep safe! Trust that your City Government will do everything in its power to contain this threat. We will not waiver, we will not fail, and we will persevere. Most importantly, let the Almighty bless and guide us as we weather this storm.

A pleasant day to all!

MARK ANDREW ARTHUR J. GOLEZ
City Mayor